

MAY WIN IN RAILS

Hon. Chauncey M. Depew Wrote of the Opportunities.

BREAKING IN THE GRADUATES

They Are Now Getting \$9 a Week, But They Will Soon Find Places of Trust if Competent.

In 1835 only fifty-eight years ago and within the memory of many business men now in active business life, the United States contained but about 1,000 miles of railway; was composed of twenty-five states, and its population did not exceed 13,000,000 souls. The valley of the Mississippi was its western horizon, and the great west and north west were unknown and unexplored except by the trapper and fur trader. To-day more than 173,000 miles of steam railways are in active operation within its borders (nearly one-fourth that of the entire world); giving employment to nearly one million persons, representing a money investment of more than \$10,000,000,000, and giving a gross earning of over \$1,000,000,000 per annum. The four-wheeled open car with its box seat for the conductor and the tiny engines of five-ton weight have grown into an equipment of 20,000 passenger, baggage and mail cars, 125,000 freight cars and 24,000 engines; while the little group of travelers who fifty-eight years ago with fear and trepidation tried the experience of being whirled along at the extreme speed of thirteen miles an hour upon the newly-invented railway have multiplied until in 1893 they numbered 800,000,000. The sisterhood of states extends from the St. Lawrence to the Gulf of Mexico and from the Atlantic to the Pacific, while the population has increased to more than 63,000,000.

There is plenty of opportunity in our railroad systems to-day for young men to win fortunes. I will cite some examples of men I know who have achieved success in railroading.

I was out last fall making political speeches. They instructed and amused large audiences but did not good. One of the places which I visited was Ithaca, N. Y. Before the train started the next morning I went up for an inspection of Cornell university. I found there the best plant for the teaching of

dent of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe system, of nearly ten thousand miles, was the store keeper at the principal locomotive shops of a western railway. Thirty-seven years ago the president of the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern Railroad company was division engineer upon the northern division of the Illinois Central railroad and prior to that time carried a rod and chain. Thirty-three years ago the vice-president and general manager of the Southern Pacific company was a passenger conductor upon the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy railroad. Thirty-eight years ago the president of the Chicago & Alton railroad was an assistant engineer in the construction of the Illinois Central railroad and served his apprenticeship with the rod and chain, and his vice-president, thirty

said: "There is a history connected with that watch which has had a great effect on the railroad service in England. The story reached France and had an influence on the railroad service there. A conductor came to me and said: 'The manager of the line has discharged me and I have been unjustly turned out.' I said to him that it was a question for him to take up with the manager alone. This man said: 'I was discharged because I was not at the station to take my train when the time came, and the reason I was not there was because this watch that the company gave me was wrong.' I then said: 'I will investigate your case. Give me that watch.' So I called the manager. The manager said: 'It was impossible; those watches are all right; I do not like the man anyhow and would not have him on the road again. I don't want a man back with whom I had a dispute.'

So Mr. Forbes said he put the watch in his pocket. He had a summer house in the country, and he wished to go to fulfill a business engagement at his office in the city involving great consequence to his company. As he drove up to the station all was quiet and no one standing around. He said to the station master: "How long before my train comes?" The agent said: "The train left here ten minutes ago." You must be mistaken. Your clock is wrong." The agent said: "That clock is all right."

Mr. Forbes pulled out his watch and found it was fifteen minutes slow. Then he went back to the office and did a lot of telegraphing, postponing the engagement and making explanations.

Then he sent for the general manager and told him the circumstances, and wanted to know who was to blame for that watch being wrong, but the general manager said he supposed that the district examiner was to blame. He sent for the district examiner, but he said it was not his business to look after those watches. He finally called on the electrician for an explanation—the man was getting \$5,000 a year, and it was his business to frequently call in and examine conductors' watches—and he said: "What is the matter with that watch?" "The trouble is, I have not looked it over for a year." "The rules require you to look them over every ninety days, do they not?" "Yes, sir." "Then you nearly caused the discharge of this man; you might have caused a great injustice to be done; you are dis-

tinguished."

years ago, was a station agent at Springfield, Ill. My earliest recollection of the president of the Michigan Central railroad is in connection with a subordinate position held by him on the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy in Chicago. The president of the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis Railroad company was an obscure young lawyer twenty-five years ago, who with unusual ability has concentrated into a successful and comprehensive system a number of lines of railway, most of which were previously unremunerative. The president of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad company, ripe in experience from nearly forty years' service, sprang from the ranks. The chief executive officer of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad company was fifteen years ago struggling in Cairo, Ill., with the varying fortunes, or rather misfortunes, of the Cairo & Vincennes road about one hundred and sixty miles long. The president of the Mobile & Ohio Railroad company, formerly president of the Illinois Central, drove a team on the tow-path of a canal, then worked as a track hand, then fired and subsequently ran a locomotive engine. The Pennsylvania system furnishes many examples of executive and department officers growing up nearly from boyhood in that great railway family and being transferred from the ranks of the workers to the sphere of large responsibilities where their experience and training might be of mutual benefit to the company and its men. The New York Central & Hudson River railroad has been controlled and directed by substantially one interest for a long term of years and in many instances is officered by those who have virtually grown up with it and its vast army of workers. I might multiply these illustrations and show that the practical operations of the greater portion of our railway mileage are directed by men who have risen from the ranks and who are familiar with the details of railroad life and railroad work.

It is because I know so much about and am so intimate with the miseries that come from non-employment to the family of the man who is unfortunate enough to be hurled out into the cold that I take the greatest care and have given rigid orders that no man shall be discharged unless there is a good and sufficient cause for it. It may be that unfortunate conditions arise

which I have over seen.

The theory was perfect, the processes were perfect, everything about it was perfect. They had every appliance which would send out a boy who could build a locomotive or an electric motor and do everything required where skill of hand and accuracy are needed.

Prof. Morris, who is at the head of that institution, said: "Mr. Depew, I feel that you are my superior officer; I am an old Central man."

"How did you get here?" I asked.

I stood on the footboard as an engineer on the Central. While a locomotive engineer, I made up my mind to get an education, believing that a mechanic could go anywhere if he had a good education.

I studied at night and fitted myself for Union college, running all the time with my locomotive, I procured books and attended as far as possible the lectures and recitations. I kept up with my class and on the day of graduation I left my locomotive, washed up, put on the gown and cap, delivered my thesis, received my diploma, then put away my diploma, put the gown and cap in the closet, put on my working shirt, got on my engine and made my usual run that day."

Then I knew how he became Prof. Morris.

A man cannot be too well educated, no matter what position in the railroad he may occupy. We have in the offices of the Grand Central depot thirty young men who are graduates of Yale and Harvard. They are getting on an average thirty-six dollars per month, but they are coming on to take places as heads of departments, and they will ultimately reach positions of profit and power in the railroad as they demonstrate their efficiency and ability.

Some forty or more years ago when the Queen of Song, Jenny Lind, was in this country, she stopped in Albany to give a concert. Early in the evening a telegraph boy called and handed her a telegram. Its contents must have been pleasing, for in her kindly way she said to him while waiting to be seen if there was a reply: "Would you like to hear me sing to-night?" He politely and promptly answered in the affirmative, whereupon she wrote upon her card "submit the bearer" and handed it to him.

A Chicago friend of mine who knew the circumstances told me that some years ago he called on Jenny Lind at her home in England for the double purpose of paying his respects to her and revealing to her mind the circumstances I have related. She remembered me and so the gentleman said to her: "Would you like to know what has become of old boy?" She replied that it would interest her very much, whereupon her friend said: "He is the president and executive officer of the Chicago & North Western Railway company, which operates one of our largest systems of railways in America." During years of toil with energy and ability the boy had passed through many of the practical stages of railroad work, successively familiarizing himself with the labor, hardships, duties and responsibilities of nearly all classes of railway employees. Through eight years now the presi-

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